1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14



children are abhorred and every effort is made to get the woman married should she be pregnant. Although her shame is great, it is nothing compared to the problems that the new individual will encounter unless people come to accept his mother's agnatic kin group as his—and whether that group will in fact accept him as a member. The pariah status of illegitimate children is easily seen in the widespread belief that they can only marry others like themselves or people of slave status.

So much then for the first two features of kinship, those of genealogy and descent. The third aspect, that of marriage relations, brings us much closer to what is commonly thought of as family life in western society. Using the anthropological jargon, we can sum up the kinds of relations invoked by a Kanuri marriage by saying that Kanuri marriage is polygynous with virilocal residence patterns which have a patrilocal emphasis and an exceptionally high divorce rate. In plain English this means that the men can marry more than one wife, up to four by Islamic law (they are polygynous); the wife invariably leaves her home to go and live with her husband in a place chosen by him (they are virilocal); and, this often but not always proves to be in the vicinity of, or even inside, the household of the husband's father (there is a tendency toward patrilocality). Finally, most Kanuri marriages, the vast majority of them certainly, end in divorce.

Because a marriage usually involves the creation of whole sets of kinship links where none existed before, the way in which such changes are brought about and made "official," or publically recognized, is an important aspect in the anthropological study of marriage. Furthermore, such activities are also very important moments in the lives of the individuals concerned, who must see to it that all that should be done is done correctly according to traditional custom. Thus we start looking at marriage by describing its inception.

In thinking about a marriage the first question that any Kanuri man asks himself is whether he can afford it or not. That is, can he and those people on whom he can count for financial aid take on the expense of a marriage ceremony and bridewealth payments; and, if he can, how high can he go?

A man who already has a wife or wives knows that he must give gifts, supposedly equal to those going to the bride, to wives already married to him. He knows that the pressures for expenditures for drummers, food, transportation of the bride to his dwelling, and many other aspects of the ceremony, will very likely involve more of an outlay than he can readily predict. Can the capital be raised for such an undertaking? Most men are helped by their friends, their kin, and their political and economic patrons if they have any. Kanuri recognize the outcome of marriage expenses in their oft-quoted saying, "A man who is not in debt over a wedding is a man who has no friends."

Bridewealth payments form the basic marriage expense, and they can vary in size and elaborateness depending upon the status of the two family groups who are joined through the marriage, the marital history of the girl, the previous relationship of the groom to the girl's family, the bargaining power of each party to the marriage arrangement, and the time of year during which the payments are to be made. Although other factors can enter in and pull the bridewealth up or down in individual cases, these are the most effective determinants of bridewealth.

The payments themselves can be divided into three general categories, plus a "rebate." First there are one or more small gifts given to the girl and her rela-

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tives, usually female relatives, in the name of the groom; these are called the *kwororam*, or the asking-a-question payments. Secondly, there are the formally recognized payments. The first of these is a large one called the *luwaliram*, given to the *luwali*, or the man who officially gives the bride to the groom and to whom she will return if she ever runs away or separates from her husband. This is followed several weeks later by a *sada'u*, a small fee given to the girl's family through her *luwali* on the morning of the wedding day. And thirdly there are a number of small payments paid out to the girl and her young friends, to the female relative(s) who accompany her to the groom's house, and to any unmarried sister she has left behind. The groom receives a few small gifts from the girl's family, and on the morning of the wedding day when the *sada'u* is paid, he receives gifts of money, clothes, and even on occasion a horse. He never knows beforehand, however, just how much or how little this "rebate" will come to in relation to his own outlay for the marriage.

When the status of the two families is similarly low, as it is in the vast majority of rural marriages, then there is very little worry over bridewealth. Generally it is not very high and almost standardized for the locality. An important man always pays more bridewealth because everyone believes he can afford it. Paying more for everything he does, including marriage, is one of the ways he validates or proves his higher social rank. An interesting insight is also gained when it is realized that not only is the status of the person getting married taken into account, but also the status of those whom he is associated with and whom he can count on for help. In our little town of Magumeri many people tried to have their daughters marry members of my household because, as they laughingly admitted, they knew I would help my household members with bridewealth, and my apparently wealthy status in Magumeri meant that payments could be set a good deal higher than usual for such a marriage.

No matter what the status of the two families may be, girls who have not been married before command a much higher set of bridewealth payments, and more of them. The magnitude is often three to five times as much and in extreme cases it goes even higher than that. Men tend to give more as they grow older and can afford it, while conversely women often receive less as they go from one marriage to the next. Kanuri say that a woman who has been married many times has been used a great deal and is therefore worth much less than others who have not had so many marriages and been used as much. On the other hand, if she remained with previous husband(s) for longer periods, has a reputation for quiet obedience, and staying inside the household, then the groom feels more confident about her and will pay more. Similarly if the women has borne children and has demonstrated her fertility, she is also worth more. Although some men know practically nothing about their wives to be, others investigate them and inquire into the reasons for previous marriage break-ups and so on. Was it because her previous husband beat her, or because she was an adulteress, or was excessively jealous of co-wives? Did she not perform her wifely duties properly, or show proper respect to her husband? Certainly some men like to know what kind of wife they are getting and this affects their willingness to pay bridewealth. However, it is not uncommon for a Kanuri man to say that he knew a particular wife for only a week, or perhaps just a day or two before they were married. In this case the woman's marital record is

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581 unimportant; instead the man considers other factors such as his need for a wife, the marriage expenses including the bridewealth, and the physical attractiveness of the woman.

• 583 The previous relationship of the groom to the girl and her family can vary the bridewealth enormously. Often the groom, and/or his family, are acquainted with the girl, and/or her family, as neighbors and friends. When this is the case, then other factors tend to enter in to determine the bridewealth. But in a number of special and not uncommon situations, the groom is released from the bulk of the bridewealth or it is substantially lowered. If the girl is his cousin (the Kanuri [582] marry all cousins, although they claim it is not good to marry one's mother's sister's daughter) then he may find that only a small *sada'u* payment is necessary. About [584] one-fifteenth of all Kanuri marriages are of this kind, and of these about one-fifth involve unions in which the little cousin was promised to the boy when she was an infant at the time that he was circumcised, roughly about puberty. At that time he becomes her *luwali* or the dispenser of her marriage rights and can arrange for her future husband or marry her himself when she reached puberty. In other cases the 583 groom is a dependent or client of the girl's *luwali* (usually her father) and the 581 marriage tends to cement the relationship between him and the father even further. Indeed many subordinates of "big men" in Bornu think of their superiors as being obliged to help them find a wife. In such a case the groom may assume only a small portion of the expenses, or the wife-to-be is a daughter or relative of the superior and the latter depresses the payments purposely, so his subordinate can marry. In a few cases girls are given to *mallams* (koranic teacher-priests) and no bridewealth is required. Such unions are called "marriages of charity" and the *luwali* who abrogates his rights to bridewealth in this fashion is considered to be a pious man. In actual practice it is not very common. This is seen in the marriage histories of the *mallams* themselves who may have married once in five or six times this way but rarely more than that. *Mallams* claim that they do not like it because it makes them obligated to the wife-giver for free prayers, constant officiating as a religious leader in the household of the *luwali*, and so on, so that they avoid such charity in order to maintain their independence. This avoidance is mitigated if they are already members of the *luwali's* household and the marriage is simply cementing the relationship.

583 The bargaining abilities on both sides of the marriage can also determine the bridewealth. The groom's representatives are told by the girl's family, through her *luwali*, that the groom can expect many gifts which will compensate for an elaborate and expensive wedding. The groom's representatives tell the woman and her relatives, especially her *luwali*, of the groom's qualities, especially his kindness and generosity, his wealth and expectations of more, his potentialities as a successful man, and his connection through friends, through his own services, and relatives to very important people. On his side, the *luwali* speaks of the benefits to be gained by marriage to this particular girl and slowly the bridewealth payment, especially the *luwaliram*, emerges at a set price. On her first wedding night, a pre- [585] viously unmarried girl also bargains at great length in order to bid up a special consummation fee that is her right.

If the marriage arrangements take place in the autumn, or around harvest time, it is assumed that the man will have more cash than at other times. Thus the

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price at this time of year for nearly everything, including weddings and bride-wealth, goes up.

When all the exchanges are completed everyone participating in a wedding gets some present of money, food, and clothing. The *luwali*, especially at first marriages, gets the bulk of the bridewealth and distributes the rest to the girl's family both on her mother's and her father's side. After the first marriage the girl tends to keep more and more of the bridewealth for herself, giving the *luwali* what amounts to a fee for serving as the official bride-giver. It is also important to note that when there are disputes between a husband and wife, the first person to whom both turn for arbitration is the *luwali*.

The Kanuri think of getting married in several ways. First of all they divide all marriages into first marriages (to take a girl or a small girl), and secondary marriages with a divorced woman (to take a woman or to take a divorced woman). First marriages take place for a girl around the time of puberty, while boys do not marry until they are in their late teens or early twenties, and young men of twenty-eight and twenty-nine who have not yet been married are not hard to find.

An interesting sidelight on marriage with previously unmarried young girls is the ambivalence men feel about it. Men obtain much prestige from such a marriage. But its cost invariably puts a man into great debt, and consummation of the marriage itself, traditionally, is a semi-public affair in which old women related to the girl sit outside the marriage hut and whisper to their newly-wed relative that she must resist the advances of her husband. They do this until very late at night or until they are given some proof of the girl's virginity by the husband. They then make a fearful clatter in the town or village to announce the premarital chastity of their young relative. Standards of personal appearance and sexual attraction are important to Kanuri men and center on more sexually mature women. Such standards deal with hair style, facial symmetry, type of walk, and other physical attributes and skills, as well as ability at wifely chores. None of these attributes are in any degree well-developed among young girls, so that the man must control himself and almost publicly proclaim his manhood and sexual prowess with a young girl who is not defined as sexually exciting by the culture. This causes much anxiety and I have seen men praying almost continually for several weeks in order to gain the strength to carry out a virgin's consummation. It is important to note that when some western educated Kanuri talk about marriage they immediately fasten on this semi-public consummation of the girl's first marriage as a custom that will be dropped in the future, and certainly one they do not intend to carry out or even allow in their lives. From the girl's point of view, as education in western-style schools becomes more common and the length of time in school increases, then the time of first marriage for the girls will move ahead. At present however there are only a handful of Kanuri girls who attend schools beyond the age of traditional marriage.

But what is the basis for the conflict? Why are men willing to suffer to gain such an unattractive wife? Men always explain it in the same way. A young girl has never been touched sexually by other men; he is the first; he can train her as he likes, and teach her to be a proper wife to suit his own personal wishes. Besides, it is a good Muslim custom, they always add, as they do about almost every custom when they are asked. In this case they are correct, for such young marriages are very

• 583 Marriage is effected through the payment of a bride-price, the luwaliram, before the marriage proper. There can be no marriage without payment of the luwaliram. The luwaliram is conceived of as money for buying a wife. One informant stated, "It is just like buying a ram. Your children are the profit [85] (riba) of your investment." It follows, of course, that among [436] the Kanuri, children belong to the father. At present, the luwaliram is always paid in hard currency--pounds and shillings, though in former times it was paid in Maria Theresa dollars (gursus) which served as currency in the area.

The amount of the luwaliram varies with a number of factors. Luwaliram varies with social class, with urban and rural differences, and with the qualities of the bride-to-be. For common folk (talaka), it may run to five or six pounds. In the smaller, isolated villages it runs higher, occasionally over ten pounds. A Lowan may pay as much as ten to twenty pounds for his son's bride; very poor folk in the towns may pay as little as three pounds. Luwaliram for a very pretty girl, for the daughter of a kantuoma (aristocrat), or of a very wealthy man, is naturally high; while that for an ugly girl, or one who has undesirable traits, or who is no longer a virgin (bati) is conversely low.

583 If the boy is old enough to have accumulated money of his 593 own, that will go towards his luwaliram, but the bulk of it is given by his father. The boy's father, or the head of the house in which he grew up, should he have grown up in a household

583 593 other than that of his own father, is the basic contributor to 583 the luwaliram. His abakura (FaElBr) and abagana (FaYoBr) may 604 contribute a share of the luwaliram, but his bawa (FaSi) is more likely to help in building a house for the boy rather than give to his luwaliram. His yakura (MoElSi), Yigana (MoYoSi), and Rawa (MoBr) only would give money to the luwaliram if their nephew grew up in their house. If not, they have no responsi- 583 bility towards paying a share of his luwaliram. Since it typ- 593 ically happens that a boy grows to maturity in his father's house, his father has the primary responsibility for providing the luwaliram. A poor man would not ask a wealthy friend of his for luwaliram money which he, the poor man, must provide for his son.

If the father of a girl sees that his daughter is getting older, and that her prospects for getting married are not good for one reason or another, he may give his daughter away as a sadaka (alms) marriage. If he can, he gives his daughter as wife to an important malam, along with many presents and clothes. If he cannot afford to give presents, he just gives the girl. In such a marriage there is no bride-price, the only permitted exception to the general rule. The girl's father acts as her luwali, assuming responsibility for her conduct. Though she may be unattractive and bad-tempered, the man to whom the girl is given cannot refuse her if she is given as a sadaka marriage.

583 Other forms of marriage which avoid payment of a luwaliram are specifically not permitted. Exchange marriage is forbidden

583 by Maliki law. Premarital bride-service is not permitted in lieu of the luwaliram. A man would be ashamed to go to his future father-in-law to say that he had no money to pay the luwaliram.

584 The girl is represented by her luwali in arranging a marriage. The luwali may be a relative or friend of the girl, but not her father (except in the case of a sadaka marriage noted above). The luwali states the amount of the luwaliram. The bridegroom may also be represented by someone, or he may make his own arrangements. The bridegroom, or his representative, may accept the stated price, or he may bargain for a lower price. The luwaliram is given to the luwali, who in turn passes it to [431] the girl's father. The girl's father gives a token fee to the luwali, gives presents to the groom which include both money and clothing, and gives his daughter household utensils and jewelry.

583 At the time of marriage, an additional payment, <u>sədagu</u> [436] (Arabic, sadak), is made. Sədagu is paid in the form of Maria Theresa dollars, two to five being the average amount of sədagu payment, though now eight shillings may be substituted for each Maria Theresa dollar. The size of the sədagu is arranged for before the marriage, and initial payment of part of the sədagu [586] may be made before the marriage. Should a couple divorce before the entire sədagu has been paid, the difference must be paid at the time of divorce.

Finally, in addition to both luwaliram and sədagu, there is still a third type of payment, called <u>məri</u>, which must be

583 paid before the marriage or it is not a legal marriage. Mori, too, can vary in size, but it is the smallest of the three payments, and usually amounts to several shillings.

585 The wedding itself is very brief. It is presided over by a Malam, before many witnesses. The Malam asks the names of bride and bridegroom, asks them if they wish to marry, reads a section of the Koran. Then all pray, and the ceremony is ended as kola nuts (coro) are distributed to all present, and gifts are given to Malam and luwali. That evening, the husband's closest friends come to the bride's house to take her to the house of her husband. While her friends cry and try to hold her back, the husband's friends take the bride off by horse, and leave her at her husband's house. One friend of the girl refuses to leave her until the husband pays fugurum (or ferorum), which is the set amount of thirty shillings, alike for rich and poor. Fugu means hymen. The friend keeps several shillings of the fugurum for herself and gives the remainder to the mother of the bride, payment to her for protecting her daughter's virtue.

585 626 Virginity of the girl is attested to by blood stains on a white blanket which has been spread on the wedding bed. The blood-stained blanket is taken from the room the following morning by friends of the girl and brought to her mother. If it is stained, mother praises daughter, and her friends parade it throughout the neighborhood. If it is not stained, the girl is cursed by all. If the husband finds that his bride is not a

587 of the wife, in numbers, bring her clothing and belongings through the streets to her new husband's home. Later that night the bride herself comes, accompanied by her very close friend (kususu). There is no ceremony corresponding to that which takes place when a virgin marries. The following day, her friends cook the morning meal for her. After that, she cooks her own
[595] food. A man with a previous wife who marries a zogor will sleep with his new wife for three consecutive days. After the three initial days, he spends one night with each wife in regular rotation, as is the normal practice of a man with more than one wife.

589 Bachelors are very rare. The primary informant in this
[115] area, Ya Mogorom, a woman of about fifty who is herself a grandmother several times, could not think of a single adult male who had never married, though she said that it did occasionally occur. Spinsters are just as rare, and Ya Mogorom could name only a sixteen year old girl who was not yet married as an ex-
• 583 ample of an adult female who had never married. Common-law
836 marriages as such do not occur. A woman living with a man but not married to him is his nəmgəmtəm, and is quite distinct from
587 his wife as she never cooks for him. Until the age of fifty a zogor will remarry; beyond that she does not attempt to remarry. A man will remarry as long as he is able to have intercourse.
581 Sometimes old people marry for convenience, after they can no
887 longer have intercourse. She cooks his food, and he provides her with clothing and other things.

592 597 557 important man then exercises his choice by asking for the child should he observe it to be bright and attractive, or neglecting to ask should he for some reason not want the child. The child is usually given at the time of weaning. If the child is given to his chibuna, he does not return to visit his real parents, as there is shame (nungu) involved, though he will not call his adopted parent "my mother", or "my father." A man treats his adopted son (his chibuna--a reciprocal term) just as he would [428] treat his own son. However, the boy does not inherit from his [583] chibuna. The head of the household does supply his adopted son with a bride-price when he marries.

557 592 597 565 Many boys are named after nobles, after Lowans and Ajias. Some of these chibuna are taken into the aristocratic household, though a good many are not and grow up in their true father's household. Certain talaka household heads have become very wealthy in the recent years, and have three or even four wives and very large households. Neighbors and acquaintances may name their sons after these men, who may then take their young chibuna into their household. It is clear, therefore, that size and composition of one's household is related to the old system of social stratification (royalty, aristocracy, talaka, slaves), since slaves are part of the household of both royalty and aris- [178] tocracy. It is also related to the rise of new classes of people, as a result of changing economic and political conditions, and this can be seen in the giving of children to household heads who are themselves talaka, but have become powerful and wealthy.

592 father and son, though of course kinship has nothing to do with
609 setting up that relationship in the first place. In this sense,
571 the household functions like a kin group but is not itself a product of kinship.

592 The Kanuri do not hire servants, nor do they typically hire
461 other Kanuri to work for them. A man's labor is not for hire,
571 to be paid for in cash. Though the Kanuri have long used money in commercial dealings, its use has never been extended to labor. One man works for another because that is part of his obligation which grows out of their relationship. A tata njima works for the master of the household, not for any immediate payment such as wages, but because the relationship between a tata njima and his master entails labor on the part of the tata njima. Not only is he expected to perform any task asked of him by the household head, he is also expected always to act in the interests of the household head, and constantly to protect those interests. Tata njima who are part of the household of a trader help him in the distribution and sale of his goods and travel to other markets selling goods in his behalf; they also farm for him during the rainy season, and do all sorts of tasks about the compound.

592 In turn, the head of the household is obliged to provide
571 his tata njima with shelter and with clothing, and to feed
[583] them. He provides the luwaliram for male members of the house-
[586] hold, and stands in as luwali for females. After a divorce, both man and woman may return to his household. He is also ex-

836 [589] husbands. These women (sower) are sexually available to all men, and are given gifts and market money for the sexual privileges they grant. The typical adolescent male has his first sexual experiences with a woman older than himself. However, when he decides to marry he usually tries to find a woman of roughly his own or of a junior age group.

582

885 581 First marriage marks the beginning of adult status for a man. The event announces and enables a move towards semi-independence which is aided and abetted by the avoidance relation between his father and his wife, as well as by the subject-matter avoidance of his marriage in conversations with his parents. Furthermore, he now commands an independent source of cooked food, which he can use for hospitality and its return, whereas previously he was obliged to others for this service. Kanuri males consider this to be one of the most important reasons for getting married, especially at the lower ranks of society.

885 581 264 437 To understand the value placed on this function of marriage it must be realized that men from about the age of fifteen or sixteen onwards like to eat in the company of other men. Without a wife, a young man must join a group of eaters one (or more) of whose wives prepare the food. For this privilege he is obligated to the food provider, an obligation which may include hoeing his farm, going on messages for him, helping him repair his compound, etc. With a wife a young man can return eating favours on the same terms, thus equating himself to his hosts and creating obligation (a) for return meals from men who have wives, and (b) of a diffuse nature from men who have none. It will be shown later that a wife is also valued as a socio-economic asset in the determination of her husband's productive capacities.

581

583 434 Today, almost all men in rural areas, and many in the city, derive some of the money for marriage from the cash crop. This determines

583 This determines
434 that for the majority of the population, marriages take place from
[585] about November to the end of February. The exceptions to this rule occur among those with a steady source of income or access to loans.
583 The agnatic kin group plus own-mother, if she is able, can be counted
602 on to help as well. As we have seen in Chapter IV, exceptions to this traditional custom can be found when a relative is against a young man's marriage because it will deprive the relative of the social and economic advantages of the young man's dependence.

583 The Kanuri say that a man who is not in debt to his friends
585 after contracting and carrying out a marriage has no friends. In other
426 words, for everyone, except the extremely wealthy, it is a mark of one's
572 own social role in a relational network to borrow from friends at the time of one's wedding. Failure to do so is a declaration by implication that the marrying individual does not trust his friends well enough to become obligated to them. His friends may also suspect that he has enough liquid capital to be independent of them (and benevolent superiors). Such action may easily lead to a flurry of attempts to borrow money from the prospective bridegroom as soon as the wedding is over.
583 Finally, a young man may expect and borrow money from anyone, besides
585 the above, to whom he renders service and to whom he gives discipline-
426 respect. Indeed a compound head or any political figure knows that lend-
571 ing and giving money for weddings is a primary method of maintaining subservience of subordinates.

583 In Kanuri society there are two related ways of regarding
585 the cost of carrying out a marriage (male speaking). Firstly, there is the cost of the entire proceedings, including cloth purchases, gifts of sundries, soap, perfumes, oil, a ram, fees to participant friends, entertainers, bridewealth, etc., minus the gifts from the girl's family and

583
585 the receipt of gifts from friends and relatives. Secondly, within this overall expense there is the bridewealth itself. Thus when considering marriage in Bornu it is necessary to distinguish between the capital outlay made for "taking" a woman,(1) and the total capital outlay for initiating and going through with a marriage proceeding. A Kanuri male can usually recall the exact figure of his bridewealth for most of his past marriages, but has some difficulty in remembering the entire marriage cost of all but the most recent of his nuptials.

[128] Rather than abstract out bits and pieces of the events of the marriage costs it will be more comprehensible to give a brief description of the payments made in connection with marriage inception in the chronological order of their occurrence.

583
584 In the case of a virgin marriage, negotiations are initiated through a gift called the kwororam (the asking-a-question fee or gift). This gift is given most commonly by an intermediary for the husband to the luwali (guardian) as a gift to the girl's mother and/or senior female relatives. Included may often be a small gift for the girl herself. Information varies as to the amount of kwororam. Some felt that it should be fairly small, running from one to two pounds in cash value for the soap, cloth, pomade, perfume and other female sundries of which it was made up. But the amount is indefinite and there is room for haggling. One informant reported being told by a young girl's luwali that although he was certainly the favoured suitor another man of higher rank had been offering a slightly higher bridewealth payment. The anxious suitor was

[192] [595] (1) The Kanuri never use the verb "to buy" when referring to marriage, substituting instead the verb "to take". This was explained as being a necessary distinction in the old days when concubines could be bought in the markets, while wives were always married, i.e. "taken".

583 584 encouraged to increase his bridewealth offer and also to increase his kwororam gifts to the girl's grandmother (she had no mother in the compound) in order to increase his chances of acceptability. Only after enlarging his offer and his kwororam before witnesses did the anxious suitor discover that he was the victim of a ruse, and that there was no other bidder for the girl.

The kwororam is not considered part of the bridewealth within this present discussion or by the Kanuri themselves because it is not necessarily returnable by the girl's family if the arrangements proceed no further. It is therefore exactly what its name implies, a fee or set of gifts given for the privilege of asking and smoothing out any opposition from female relatives to the future negotiations between the girl's guardian and the would-be suitor.

The kwororam applies only to non-preferential virgin marriages. It is not practised in cousin marriage because these unions are arranged years before they are consummated. In non-virgin marriage the money and gifts which the man gives to the woman while he is sleeping with her, as a divorced woman, serve instead as the initiatory behaviour which may or may not lead to marriage. The man may also give small gifts of some cloth, soap, perfume, or other women's sundries to any senior female relative of the divorced woman, especially if she is quite a young girl or woman who values her elder's opinion. 587 [836]

583 584 The Kanuri recognise that this practice has the utility of allowing some time to elapse while the parties prepare to go more deeply and seriously into creating the marriage relationship.

If there has been a kwororam, the luwaliram occurs one to three months afterwards. This payment is the largest single amount given by the male (with the aid of his supporters) to the female's group. It

583
584 is arrived at through bargaining done between intermediaries for the husband-elect and the girl's luwali. The primary reason given for this use of intermediaries is that a man should not indulge in argument with his potential father-in-law. The luwali of the girl uses a number of arguments to persuade the suitor to raise the price of the luwaliram. Thus he tells of the qualities of the girl, her family connections, the large number of people to whom the luwaliram must be distributed, i.e. the people who have a claim or an interest in the girl's marriage. He often hints broadly at the gifts which the young man may expect from the girl's family to offset the expense of the payment, in order to assure the suitor that the bridewealth payment is only a returnable token which should be raised in order to add dignity and prestige to the entire affair. Most of it, in all likelihood, he suggests will be returned at the next ceremony (sada'a) on the day of the wedding. The luwali also tries to assure the groom's party that the girl will have a very fine dowry of enamel plates, clothes, pots, pillows, mats, jewellry, etc., which will give the groom much prestige and perhaps even a source of capital. The luwali may complain that he is spending a lot of money on the dowry, which he feels must be compensated by a high bridewealth payment. The husband-elect, on the other hand, tries to point out through his intermediaries how much the marriage expenses in general are costing him and how the entire negotiation may endanger his socio-economic status. However, he must not push such an argument too far or his suit might be considered ill-advised. His best argument is usually a threat of withdrawal, or a feint in that direction, at which point the prices may be lowered somewhat as an inducement to his re-entry into the fray.

[602] The luwaliram payment is distributed by the luwali among the close bilateral relatives of the young girl, although he keeps a major

583
584 portion of the money for himself.. The pattern emphasizes the patri-
602 lateral group, especially the relatives living in close association with the luwali who are often as not his agnates. However, the girl's mother, her mother's brother and her mother's own parents, if present or nearby, always receive a small part of the luwaliram.

587 With increased age and number of divorces, marriages become more and more an individual matter between the male and the female participants and the woman tends to take over the luwaliram payment for herself. She may be living with relatives at the time who often serve as her intermediaries and collect the payments for her. In this case she gives them a small amount of the luwaliram payment.

584 With the completion of the luwaliram payment the final ar-
585 rangements for the marriage are settled by the parties. The day of the wedding is set in the period of the next few weeks as well as the place of formalization and the price of the sada'a, or second and final payment of the bridewealth. During the time of the luwaliram payments the man tries to iron out the details of the wedding party. How many drummers will there be? How many people are coming (if the girl lives in another town)? What will be the means of conveyance for her and her dowry to the house of the groom? Will many of the wedding party besides the girl's mother stay for the one week confinement period (if she is a virgin)? A score of such questions and decisions about them are usually discussed and agreed upon at this time.

584 If the marriage does not take place after the payment of the
091 luwaliram, generally speaking it can be expected that litigation of some kind will result. If the man breaks it off himself, then the girl's family (or the woman) usually feel aggrieved and try to keep some or even all of the payment. Contrarily, if the girl's family breaks off the wedding,

584 691 the man requests that the luwaliram payment be returned to him (as it should be traditionally). Very often a man may try initially in the judicial proceedings to regain his entire investments, asking not only for the luwaliram, but a sum which includes his entire outlay of capital to date for the wedding. In such cases the position is usually just a beginning for bargaining. However, if the adjudicator can be convinced that the girl's or woman's group intended to defraud, or break faith from the very beginning of negotiations, the man might possibly be awarded more than just the luwaliram by the court. On the other hand, either party has the right of retraction before the formal wedding day ceremony (sada'a) which for the man means forfeiture of his payments, and for the woman and her group, means repayment of the luwaliram to the rejected suitor. For example, in one case observed, a man was repaid his luwaliram because a higher bidder had come on the scene.

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585 In the early morning on the day of the wedding the groom with his male friends and relatives, along with male friends and relatives of the bride's household, meet at the household of the luwali, or at the house of a ranking person of the ward or town for the sada'a. The tendency is to use the luwali's house more among higher ranks in the city, while lower status groups and rural people generally use the compound of a local ranking person. At this time the second and final payment of the bridewealth, the sada'a is made. It is most commonly referred to in Maria Theresa dollars although most often paid in pound sterling. For peasant non-virgin weddings in the Magumeri area during 1956-7, the price seemed to be fairly standardized around the value of 4 M.T. dollars (28-32 shillings). The disposal of this payment is similar to that of the luwaliram.

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The major part of the ceremony is given over to examining

3: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1960 MS14 Kanuri MS14



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publically the gifts from the girl's family to the husband-elect. These can include such items as men's robes, pillows, mats, money, grain, sometimes a horse, or a saddle. Male informants expressed the opinion that the closer the gifts to the groom approximated the combined value of the luwaliram and the sada'a, the more satisfactory was the entire affair. In only one case was such equivalence ever observed (1) although tales were told of others. These stories always referred to a lower ranking individual who had married the virgin ward of a rich, powerful person. The hero of the story was always spoken of as having been given a girl and a large amount of property equal to or surpassing his bridewealth payments. Taken for granted in these reports was the loyalty and service which the husband-elect gave to his benefactor both before and after the marriage. The only other incidence when gifts to the groom are of a grandiose nature occurs when both the girl's family and the groom are rich, powerful persons and there is competition in the gift giving.

All the males who attend this ceremony, contribute a little money to the groom. It is collected by the sowa kura (big friend) who serves as "best man" for the wedding. He gives the mallams who lead the prayers a little money, and presents the official or ranking person at whose house the sada'a took place a small fee, if this person was not the girl's luwali and takes charge of the gifts to the husband-elect. During the entire wedding he pays the proper people, accepts gifts for the groom, brings him information as to what is going on and what is re-

(1) In this case the virgin girl was being married, high above her status, to a highly respected and fairly well-to-do person, by local rural standards. The father-in-law (luwali in this case) felt that he must try to give this new husband as good an impression of the girl's family as possible, and please him in every way. Consequently, the gifts to the groom were much larger than usual.

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583 quired, heads the party bringing the bride to the groom's house, and generally acts as a middleman between the groom and everyone with whom the latter is supposed to have dealings. Informants commented that this allows the groom to remain unruffled by the many decisions and social obligations which are occasioned by the wedding ceremony.

585 After the sada'a and luwaliram have been paid and the gifts to the groom exchanged the bridewealth payment is completed. However, there remain the rest of the marriage expenses which can be impressive. During the entire day of the wedding the kususu (female head of the wedding proceedings for the groom) demands that the groom supply the celebrating women with kola nuts and tobacco flowers for staining their teeth and pay any drummers who have been employed for the dancing celebrations. At a virgin marriage a special payment, the kususuram, must be paid through the kususu (woman head of the wedding) consisting of a ram, soap, shoes, and kola nuts for the women. This expenditure is used for the performance of a special hair washing ceremony held on the first day of marriage. At all weddings the kususu requires a small gift for her services. This is carried over to the sowa kura (the "best man") who must also be given a gift of a robe and/or some money for his efforts at the wedding. When the groom's party (minus the groom) brings the virgin girl from her household a small payment of money (majila) must be paid to the eldest unmarried sister of the young virgin, if any reside in the compound, so that she will feel no jealousy and spite over her young sister's marriage.

Since the girl must traditionally arrive on horseback in any kind of marriage, the man holding the bridle and guiding the horse is given a small fee for the safe delivery of the bride. The wedding party of singing, joyful women must also be given gifts by the groom. At one

585 virgin wedding in which 15 women had come thirty miles on foot with their little relative and friend who was to be married, each of them was given five shillings by the bridegroom, the girl's mother was given twenty shillings and the two drummers, who had accompanied the party, were given fifteen shillings each. The groom had also paid the expences of the journey which included the rental of two camels for five pounds. In other words the journey had cost him somewhere around ten or eleven [583] pounds. His bridewealth payments had been eight M.T. Dollars and seventeen pounds sterling or about twenty pounds, which means that the bridal journey alone had cost him as much as half of his bridewealth payments.

Before the consummation in the privacy of his hut, the groom must bargain with the young bride over the <u>feroram</u> (consummation money, literally: the virgin's fee). This is usually achieved quite rapidly since there is a fairly standard price range of one to two pounds for this payment and agreement is commonly reached after a short conversation.

583 One final point must be made about Kanuri bridewealth; this is the idea of <u>use</u>. Kanuri moral tradition defines the bridewealth payment as a transfer of property given for the use of the woman by her husband. This is not a static but a processual arrangement which changes 583 its nature through time. Thus, if a woman leaves a man within the first 586 year after marriage, before he has had a chance to utilize her services in agricultural production, then he has "not had his money's worth" and requires some of it back. This applies just as well to women who are in seclusion; indicating that it is the total function of the woman whose use the male feels he has acquired. If a divorce results very rapidly after the marriage through any fault of the woman, the male usually feels aggrieved and demands that part of the bridewealth be returned. His

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586 explanation of the matter is that his payments merited him more use of the woman than he has received. However, after a year or so (varying with the amount of the bridewealth, the reasons for divorce, the age and number of divorces the woman has previously had) and increasing with time (i.e. use), the husband's claim upon the returnability of his bridewealth diminishes. After a year and a half or so he can reclaim very little, except in proven cases of adultery, where he collects a money compensation awarded by the court. On the other hand, if during the first year of marriage, it can be proven by the girl and her family that the man has given offence or broken the rules, the marriage can be dissolved and the bridewealth forfeited.

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593 In practice, the system can be manipulated to the detriment
602 of unsuspecting persons. One pathetic individual, who had been enticed
596 into marriage with a virgin, found that the girl's grandmother with
[603] whom she had been living was against the marriage. Every time he left town for a day or two the girl's dowry was removed from the girl's hut and taken back to her luwali's compound across town where her grandmother lived. The husband had to threaten court action to get it back. The excuse used was that the girl's family was afraid of thieves. Gossip in the town judged that it was the grandmother who was hoping for a dissolution of the marriage. Townspeople claimed that she was trying to anger the husband by taking the dowry and the girl when he went away and only returning the girl when he came back. The matter soon came to a head when the husband decided to move to the city and take his wife with
[691] him. The girl's family disagreed and the matter went to court. The luwali and the grandmother accused the husband of mistreating the girl and claimed that the marriage should be dissolved with forfeiture of the bridewealth. The husband defended himself by saying that he had

583 only been married two months and had received no use of his capital out-
593 lay, therefore he would only give the girl back if his total marriage
602 expenses were returned. He calculated the amount to be twice the bride-
596 wealth. The judge ruled that since he had only slapped the girl a few
695 times there were no grounds to the charge of mistreatment and the husband should take the young girl to the city with him and try to straighten out his marriage difficulties.

The girl's family then told her to go to the city but not play the role of dutiful wife. Her luwali bragged publicly that she would be returned quite willingly by the husband inside of a week (it was actually three weeks before the girl did return). That is to say, it was predicted by the luwali that the husband would break up the marriage and send the girl out of his house, thereby forfeiting the bride-wealth. Once in the city the girl cooked badly, quarrelled with her co-wife, emptied the poor man's prayer pot when she needed water, and in a hundred little ways made his life miserable. However, she committed no one great offence which the husband felt he could legally get hold of as a respectable person.(1)

In the end, he lost his temper and told her to get out and go back to her family. Before doing so, he recounts how he first gave her a sound beating in order to get at least that much satisfaction from such a material loss in his investment; for in sending her home he was breaking up the marriage and thereby forfeited the bridewealth.

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592 It will be noticed in the above example that the independent

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[18] (1) The range of complaints for which people will seek adjudication varies with socio-economic and rural/urban status. It is an upper class norm to keep most marital problems private unless it is absolutely necessary to go to court, while in the hamlets a woman was observed who, with her agnatic kin as supporters, brought her husband to court for having had sexual intercourse too frequently and wanted the judge to limit his advances by a ruling of the court.

B. Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1960 MS14 Kanuri MS14



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593 movement of the bride and her dowry from the husband's residence angered him. This should not be taken to mean that the husband feels he owns the dowry. His claim to the dowry is similar (not identical) to his claim to the woman, i.e. he has certain privileges over her use which are conditional upon his living up to her expectations and those of her family (if she is a young girl) of being a good husband. Dowry and bride are called the same thing (larusa) and are related in people's minds as a unitary phenomenon which comes to a man's house as the result of his marriage negotiations and the payment of bridewealth. Therefore, loss of dowry implies partial loss of bride. Usufruct of bride and dowry by the husband is however different, for use of dowry is dependent not upon the formation of a marriage but upon husband-wife relations. The husband may in time gain access to the dowry as a source of capital, if his wife trusts him. This occurs however only after long periods of marriage. Even then the wife merely loans him some of her capital rather than giving it to him outright, and if he is clever he usually returns a little more than he takes. This is because the woman considers her dowry as part of her marriageable self; it helps define her social value as a wife or potential wife. A woman who had been married many years to the same man, when given a small gift of an enamel dish, put it among her possession and called it larusa (in this sense, woman's possessions). The man who gives bridewealth for a wife gains her services as a human larusa (a bride) but her will and partial independence is recognized in that he cannot take over her dowry carte blanche but must wait until the relationship between them is sufficiently durable and trustworthy so that his use of her possessions is not open to suspicion of fraud. Since durable marriages are not very common, neither is husband use of dowry. A man who started using his wife's dowry without her knowledge and con-

A man who started using his wife's dowry without her knowledge and consent would have a fine argument on his hands immediately and most probably a divorce proceeding. One mother turned her young adolescent son over to a judge for a whipping because he took one of the enamel plates from her dowry to sell for cash. A woman's concept of her own personal worth is tied closely to her dowry. During her youth, it is the material expression of her relationship to her own family background. Later, as her independence grows and she adds to the dowry, she looks on it more as her personal property, her savings, which give her a measure of value in her immediate society. She can say of herself that she has 250 enamel dishes, while her younger co-wife has only 125.

The Kanuri recognize different varieties of marriage and have separate terms for each of them. Whether these are in fact different forms is a question of interpretation which will be discussed later.

The first and most important distinction about a marriage concerns the virgin status of the woman. This consequently divides all marriages into two broad categories depending upon whether or not the female has ever been married before. If she has, the marriage is described as kamu gwojin (he takes a woman). Conversely, if the female is a virgin, the union is termed a fero gwojin (he takes a girl or virgin). All informants agreed that union with a virgin is the most highly valued form of marriage in their society. They explained this by pointing to the chaste state of the girl. She is not used, they say, and this is good. However it should be noted that informants were also agreed that virgin girls were not sexually exciting or attractive. One informant, a man of about forty years of age was observed in almost constant prayer for a whole week preparing for his first night of virgin marriage which very nearly ended in failure, only succeeding on the second attempt with the aid of magical devices.

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587 Men marry if their harvest money holds out longer than their shopping, and their aspirations fit their resources. Generally speaking men can obtain a wife within their price range. The variation in expense for marriage with a divorced woman is large, but is lower than a virgin marriage at any one level in the society. The entire affair can cost as low as two to four pounds ($5.60 to $11.20 in 1955-7) or approximately 11% of the smallest annual income recorded (twenty-seven pounds in cash and kind). The number of times a woman has been married and her class status determine the extent of the
587 bridewealth. One informant, a man of about 33, married a woman of similar age. The entire bridewealth did not exceed four pounds in value even though the woman was fairly "well-connected". Her father's brother, with whom she was visiting at the time of the marriage, was a court official in the District Headquarters, and she herself was an urban woman. The informant stated that the bridewealth was to be very small because, "She had been used very much", i.e. she had been married and divorced many times. This meant that her services and favours had been granted to many others, and that she was prone to this kind of behaviour. Thus, no very good assurances could be given from past performances that the projected marriage would last very long (the informant divorced her five and a half months after the wedding). Therefore no great investment in her as wife could be made.

581 Men desire wives primarily for their cooking and food-producing skills, although other factors such as culturally prescribed propriety, sexual abilities, personality attributes, family background etc. all play a part in the choice of any particular woman. Some men also claimed that they would prefer to marry high ranking, rather than wealthy women, if forced to choose between these two qualities. Women generally replied in the reverse, i.e. they would prefer to marry wealthy rather

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557 be remembered that a bride's family is traditionally of higher status than a groom's. In this situation we see the perfect fit to the tra-- ditional evaluation of status between a man (and his group) and his in- [583] laws. The bridewealth is usually not excessive since the entire set of arrangements takes place within the extended household organization of one wealthy and/or high ranking man. This does not mean that the groom must live inside the superior's household, for the organization may encompass a group of households. The arrangement parallels the form of cousin marriage since two members within one organization are being married, rather than members from two separate and distinct organizations.

Another way of doing the same thing would be for the household head to find a girl from among the households of his friends or relatives and initiate the arrangements for a marriage between his subordinate and the girl in question. In this case the superior would almost certainly help the subordinate with gifts and loans of money. This kind of behaviour is very similar to that of a father obtaining a wife for his young unmarried son who lives in the father's compound. Consequently when a powerful household head arranges such a wedding for his subordinate he is acting like a father to his follower. Informants noted the similarity when they spoke of this kind of behaviour.

Where no strong relationship exists between two males a high ranking person may single out some individual, junior to himself in status, with whom he wishes to obtain a relationship and give him a fero (daughter, ward, girl), in order to create some obligation as a basis for their relations into the future. As a general rule the superior uses his powers of dispensation to maintain, create and strengthen supportive subordinates, while the subordinate invests his subservience to obtain the fruits of his superior's powers of dispensation.

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565 orces can be made of them, since they more often feel compelled to return to the partial seclusion of their luwali's compound, especially during their younger years. Consequently, those in higher ranks not only command higher prices for the girls they dispense, both materially and in terms of social obligations, but get more chance to dispense the same girl, given the high divorce rate. The lower class girl very often wants much more freedom in her marriage choices after her first divorce than the high ranking woman. Thus class differences make for a higher proportion of "investment material" (i.e. dispensable women) for creating obligations where they are needed most, among the upper ranks of society. It should also be remembered that upper class households tend to be larger and thus in both absolute numerical as well as in terms of more utilization being made of the same girl, the high status individual can obtain "higher returns" (more obligations and relationships) from his rights of dispensation.

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793 Nyia sada'abe - marriage of charity or gift marriage is similar in many respects to the foregoing except that the person receiving the girl or young woman (more often a virgin girl) is always a mallam (Koranic teacher-priest). Informants claim that such a marriage is considered to be a charitable act (sada'a) and confers honour upon the donor. In such cases much, if not all, of the gift giving by the male to the girl and her kin before the marriage is waived, except that in connection with the formalizing ceremony on the day of marriage. To what extent the bridewealth is excluded varies from case to case depending upon the wealth or poverty, and power of the mallam in question, and

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(1) c.f. Ellison, R.E. op. cit. He calls this nyia mallambe - a marriage with a mallam. This expression was heard, although informants preferred the term used here.

582 793 the motivations of the luwali in giving his ward. It may be that the 583 mallam is attached to a large household organization. Then the marriage [557] very closely resembles the previous type, except that the marriage payments to the girl's kin are reduced or waived because of the cultural definition of such a marriage as a charitable act by the wife-giver.

581 582 793 Again, a man may wish to express his gratitude to a mallam for supernatural aid in which the mallam utilized his special skills. This can result from medical aid, divination, or charms provided by the mallam. On the other hand, most individuals would be quite hesitant about refusing the request of a mallam for a girl, if such were made, because of the general awe in which he and his avowed supernatural powers are held in the public eye. For the same reason there is some anxiety connected to the giving of a girl to a mallam, for if anything should go wrong with the marriage and produce dissatisfaction on the part of the mallam, his powers of retaliation are very great.

582 793 This does not mean that mallams themselves receive all their wives through charity. One informant of about thirty years of age was a peasant mallam, who farmed and lived in Magumeri. He wrote charms for people, and officiated in a minor way at the ceremonies in his immediate ward of town. He had been married six times, almost always to one wife at a time, with the exception of about a one year period when he had two wives in his compound. Of these six marriages only one had been a nyia sada'abe (a gift marriage). He said that he preferred to obtain his wives like any other man, then he would owe no one any special obligations.

58 Nyia ardiabe (marriage by agreement) refers to marriages where the man and woman involved have a strong desire to marry one ano-

437 The discussion of marriage has served to illustrate
• 583 attitudes and behaviour within contractual relations in which goods and services are exchanged between persons and groups. Bridewealth is given by the man and his group of relatives and friends to the girl and her group. The closer the marriage is to being the woman's first, the more likely it is that her luwali (dispenser of marriage rights) and kin group take the bridewealth payments rather than the woman herself. Men borrow from relatives, friends, and superiors to obtain the money for marriage expenses. Thus a man's social relational network in Bornu is an important part of his capital reserve.

58 The Kanuri classify marriages into two major categories - virgin or first marriage (female speaking) and marriage with a woman who has been married before. Marriages are further subdivided on the basis of the kinds of relationships established by the wedding. The relationship between the man and woman may entail the seclusion of the wife within the compound (nyia kulle). This is not strictly an either/or category but rather a matter of degree, since all Kanuri men like to see their wives remain in the compound as much as possible. However, only the upper classes can afford to maintain and enforce such a relationship. The remaining categories can be regrouped under two headings. Firstly, there are marriages in which a man obtains a wife by virtue of his relationship to an extended household organization and its head. The household head uses his luwali role (and in some cases his influence over other luwali) to either strengthen or create obligatory relationships with other men. In some cases, these unions take the form of cousin marriages (nyia durbe). In others, they merely emphasize already existing superior/subordinate relationships, while in still others, they serve as the initiating circumstance for an attempt at such a relationship. As we have seen, gift marriage (nyia

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power and authority relations within the organization of each residence groupings. This brings us back to bərzum, for where the members of a residence grouping are obtaining the proper receipts for their subservience, their discipline-respect, then no matter what structural cleavages and conflicts are present the organization remains intact. If, however, the suborindates in the residence association see themselves as not receiving enough for their discipline-respect, or envisage more desirable receipts elsewhere, either through independence or a transfer of their subordination, then cleavages in the residence structure emerge and the group splits up.

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[583] at such a relationship. As we have seen, gift marriage (nyia sada'abe) in which a girl is given to a Koranic mallam also entails the mutual understanding of an obligatory, subordination by the Mallam to the luwali.

581 Secondly, in marriages of agreement (nyia ardiabe) and dis-
[584] covery (nyia kolatabe), the major arrangements are made between the man and the woman alone without recourse or subordination to a household head. These marriages illustrate the adaptation of marriage arrangements to the realities of Kanuri social life. Given the large population and the high divorce rate it is not possible of feasible for all weddings to function as mechanisms for strengthening and creating superior-subordinate relationships. And so this second variety of marriage arrangement operates because many women, especially as they grow older, are not willing to be pawns used for the purpose of defining relationships between men. By the same token, many are not willing to become obligated to others through marriage.